

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-2452

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART 1. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed Action: Improvements to shooting complex.

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)

3. Project Title: Central Montana Shooting Complex, Inc. (CMSC)
102 Second Avenue South
Lewistown, MT 59457

4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
Dale E. Pfau
P.O. Box 780
Lewistown, MT 59457
406-538-9408

Resolution Date: June 27, 2005

5. Cooperating Agencies and/or Supporting Groups: Fergus County Extension Office (4-H Program), Fergus County Commissioners, Fergus County Sheriff's Department. Central Montana Handgunners, Central Montana Silhouette Club, Central Montana Rifle Club, and the Black Powder Club are all participating on the board of directors. CMSC has made it know to all of the area law enforcement, youth organizations and hunters' education/safety programs that they are welcome and will have free access to the facilities. Local Boy Scout Camp, Camp Kendall, located a few miles away, is also planning on utilizing the facility as well.

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

Fergus County Montana
Approximately 2 miles North of Lewistown, MT
T15N, R18E
Sec. 3: lots 1 & 2, S1/2NeI/4

7. Project Size: Approximately 14.2 acres on the overall developed range complex currently on 160 acres of former rangeland.

8. Map:



Figure 1 - Aerial View of Range Complex

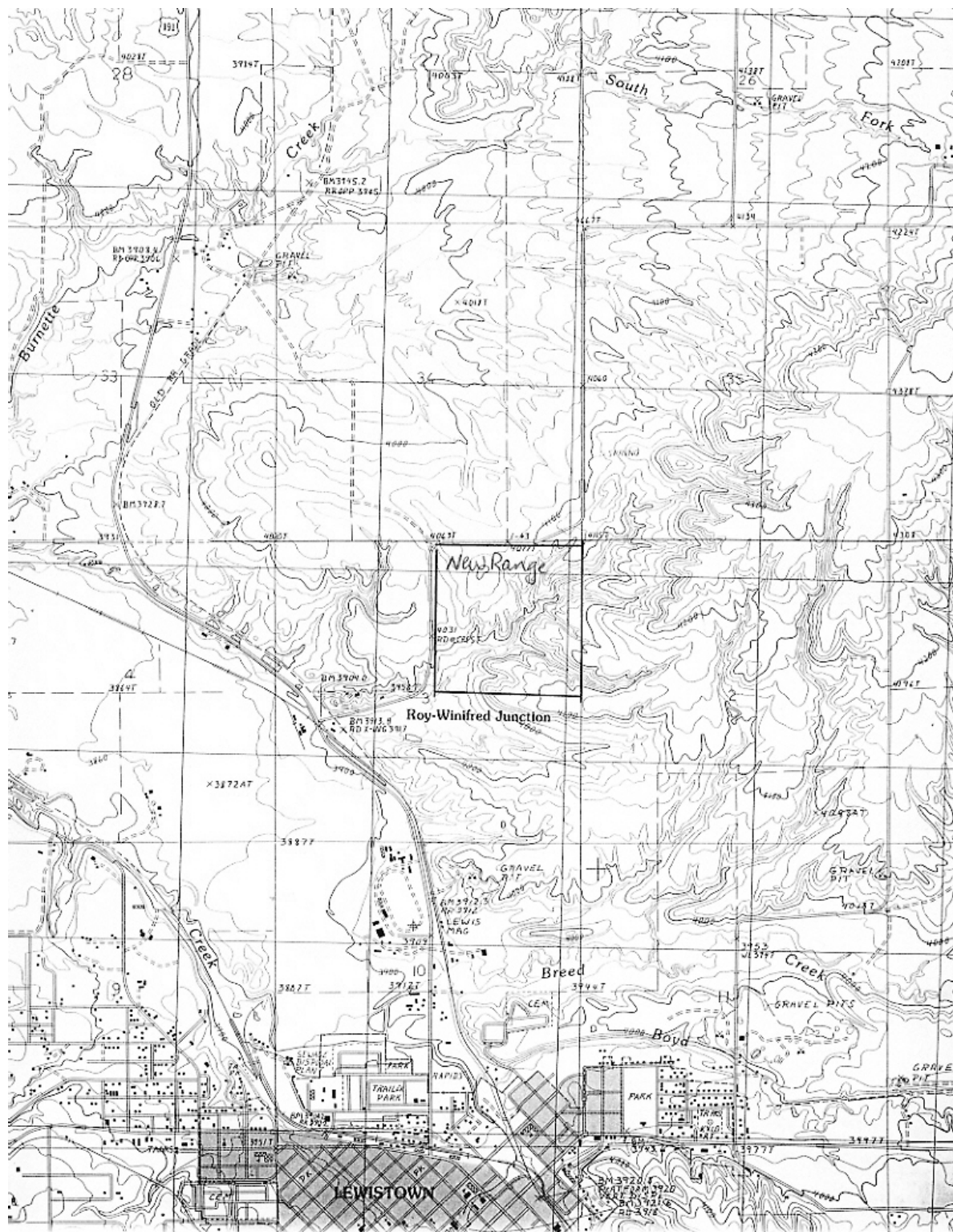


Figure 2 - Map location of range site.

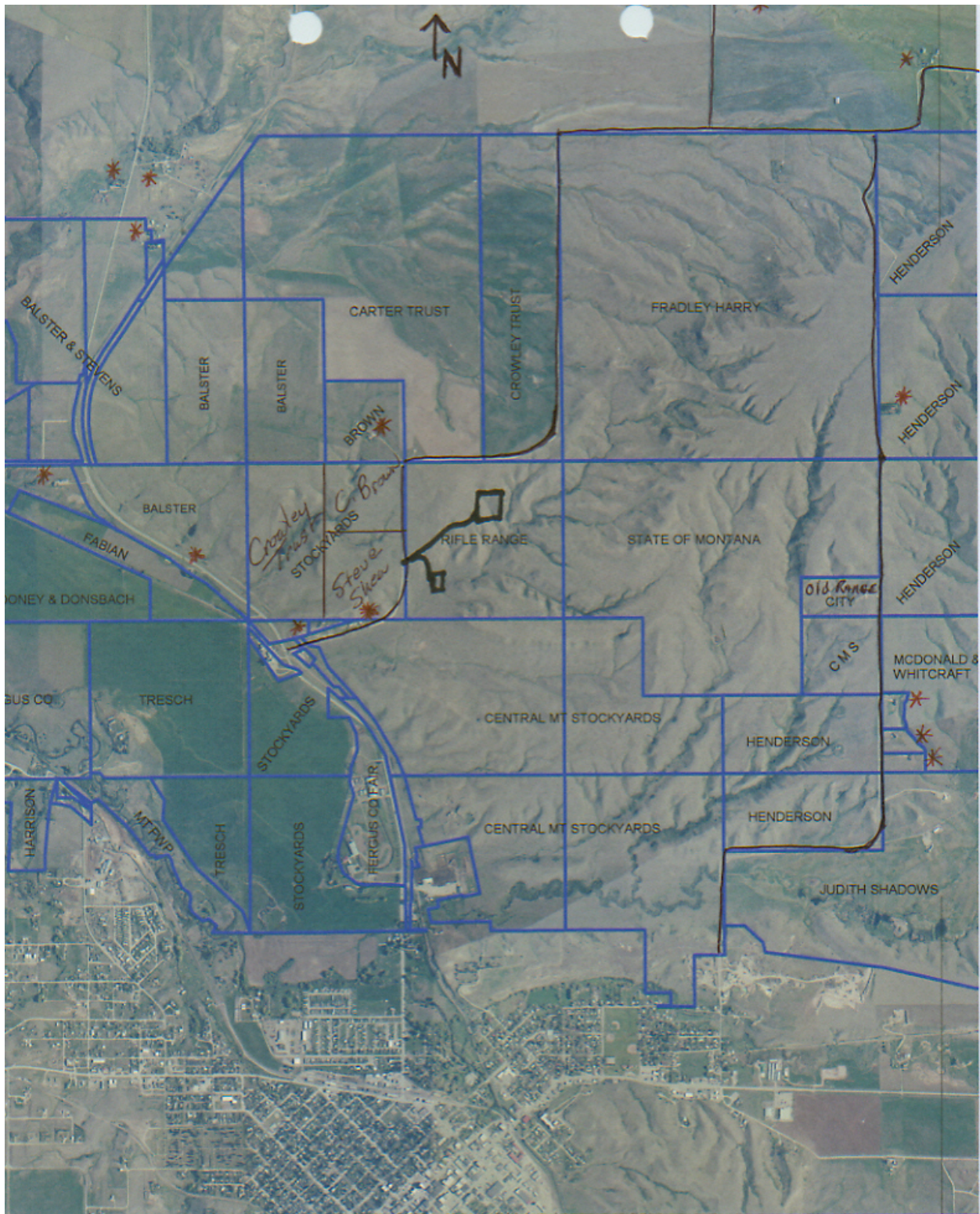


Figure 3 - Aerial View of area with range site.

9. Description of Project:

Proposed 2005 Projects: (a) Fencing off small bore and big bore ranges (b) Installation of cattle guards (c) Installation of water tanks (d) Installation of "Porta-Potties" (e) Re-seeding of 14.2 acres (f) Sterile spraying of insides of small bore berms.

Proposed 2006-2007 Projects: (a) Disc and reseed disturbed soil left from moving of construction equipment (b) Grading of roads and shooting areas (c) Gravel roads and shooting areas (d) Concrete work & shooting cover on big bore pad (e) targets (f) Concrete tables for small bore area.

All projects to be completed by June 20, 2007.

10. Listing of any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
	None	

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Up to \$75,000

11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Natural Resource Conservation Service

PART 2. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		X
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		X
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		X
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		X
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		X
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		X

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams, irrigation ditches or ponds on the site. No delineated wetlands. Water found in well drilling at 320 feet. Historic rainfall average is 12.8 inches, as per NRCS.

3. Sterile spraying to kill any noxious or invasive weed species. Grazing leases are being negotiated and may require weed control as a part of the lease.

4. Approximately 14.2 acres of disturbed areas will be sterile sprayed to control weeds and hydro seeded to re-vegetate the ground.

6. A well application has been submitted to the Montana Dept. of natural resources water rights will be given at the that time of application approval.

7. From well drilling the first 105 feet were classified as a gray shale bentonite and clay mix.

11. State of the art shooting complex with all new facilities. Old site it is replacing was an “eye-sore” and not accessible either to the handicapped or in inclement weather.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment .

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		X
5. Human health				X		X
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		X
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The site is in the middle of an agricultural area of bench land primarily used for grazing with some being tilled. Agricultural practices on the surrounding areas will continue and grazing lease(s) are being negotiated on the site for vegetation and weed control.

5. New site improves overall shooter safety from the old site. Shooting areas will be fenced to prevent livestock and the public straying into the range areas. Range will be signed as part of this project. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the National Rifle Association standards for safety of the range participants and the public at large. Noise levels will be decreased from old range. Noise test was done with neighboring residents

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

invited for a range tour then a noise test. Participants sat in their yards while rifle, pistol and shotguns were fired on the ranges. Participants reported that they were surprised that they heard much less noise and in some cases nothing compared to what they thought they would hear.

7. Range will provide year round access and handicapped accessibility. The site has much better access than the old site with improved graveled roads and shooting areas, covered shooting locations and improved designed safety. Organizations have been contacted and the range will be open to hunter education classes, youth groups, and law enforcement for training and instruction. Range will be open to the public and operated as mandated by 87-1-278, MCA.

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the proposed alternative (construction of the ranges), such as increased recreational opportunities, firearms and hunter safety training, and law enforcement training within the community. The no action alternative would be not to improve the shooting ranges and continue on with present activities. Land use would remain the same although there would be increased soil erosion and invasive weeds due to the elimination of sterile spraying and re-seeding. Present activities also include occasional shooting activities on existing or other temporary ranges. However, using safely designated, designed and supervised ranges, such as the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

List proposed mitigative measures (stipulations): NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Dale E. Pfau, President Central Montana Shooting Complex, Inc.

Narrative Evaluation and Comment:

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
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All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. Due to the minor nature and insignificant effects of the proposed action, this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The strong, positive public comments and attendance at the public hearing, combined with the potential for adding an important resource to the shooting sports and hunter education resources for the Lewistown area and the State of Montana all support the approval of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the construction of the proposed shooting ranges and range improvements for the Central Montana Shooting Complex.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: August 20, 2005

PART 3. DECISION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any: Meetings to discuss range plans held twice a year during the scoping process. Open meeting advertised on local radio and announced in newspaper inviting public participation. The meeting in March 2005 was attended by many of the neighbors of the range. Additionally there have been 2-3 newspaper articles per year in the Lewistown News Argus for the past 3 years. Public and neighbors invited on a range tour. Some neighbors participated in a noise test.

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